

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

OMB-01 EB-07 /074 W

----- 106081

R 050710Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4241

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SINGAPORE 0023

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, PINT, SN, ASEAN

SUBJECT: GOS NEW YEAR WORDS AND DEEDS

1. PRIME MINISTER LEE'S BRIEF NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE (SEE PARAS 2-4) WAS OVERSHADOWED BY DECEMBER 31 ANNOUNCEMENT OF HARSH GOVERNMENT MEASURES DESIGNED TO REDUCE AUTOMOBILE POPULATION (SEPTOL). GNASHING OF TEETH AND WRINGING OF HANDS BY BROAD SECTORS OF SINGAPORE POPULATION BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE INCREASED LEVIES ON AUTOMOBILE OWNERSHIP LENT SPECIAL POIGNANCY TO LEE'S EXPRESSED HOPE THAT "WE SHOULD DO BETTER NEXT YEAR."

2. LATTER REMARK WAS MADE IN CONTEST OF STATEMENT IN PM'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE THAT REAL GDP GROWTH IN 1975 AMOUNTED TO 4.2 PERCENT. IF LATTER PRELIMINARY FIGURE IS CONFIRMED BY DEFINITIVE DATA, IT WOULD SIGNIFY THAT ECONOMY EXPANDED AT SATISFACTORY RATE DURING SECOND HALF AFTER A FLAT FIRST SIX MONTHS. RELATIVELY FAVORABLE RESULT WAS ATTRIBUTED TO HARD WORK, AS WELL AS ANTICIPATION OF PROBLEMS AND WILLINGNESS OF GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE TO TAKE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NECESSARY, OCCASIONALLY UNPLEASANT, MEASURES.

3. LEE'S MESSAGE ALSO MADE NOW FAIRLY STANDARD, BUT PERFUNCTORY, PITCH FOR ASEAN. REFERRING TO DISPARATE CONDITIONS EXISTING IN ASEAN COUNTRIES, LEE ASSERTED THAT ASEAN COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC AND OTHER FIELDS COULD ENSURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THEREBY AMELIORATING ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS AND BLUNTING THE THRUST OF GUERRILLA INSURGENCIES.

4. ALTHOUGH MESSAGE GENERALLY ACCENTUATED THE POSITIVE, LEE DID CAUTION SINGAPOREANS AGAINST COMPLACENCY. HIGHLY CONSCIOUS OF POLITICAL AND SECURITY UNCERTAINTIES IN MALAYSIA AND THAILAND AND OF DETERIORATION IN BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA, LEE WARNED HIS LISTENERS TO PREPARE THEMSELVES PSYCHOLOGICALLY FOR THE SHOCK OF THE UNEXPECTED AND SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE. ASIDE FROM GENERAL COMMENT THAT EACH ASEAN COUNTRY HAD ITS OWN PARTICULAR PROBLEMS, HE REFRAINED FROM MENTIONING PROBLEMS IN OR RELATIONS WITH ANY SPECIFIC NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.
HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPEECHES, IMPORT CONTROLS, AUTOMOBILES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SINGAP00023
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760002-0423
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760186/aaaacyli.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 MAY 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <27 MAY 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOS NEW YEAR WORDS AND DEEDS
TAGS: EGEN, PINT, SN, ASEAN, (LEE KUAN YEW)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006